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INTERAGENCY TYPE 2 CREWS SENT TO LOWER 48

FAIRBANKS, Alaska— Regular agency employees from the USDA Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the State of Alaska Division of Forestry now make up two Type 2 Interagency Fire Crews to aid in fire suppression in the Lower-48. The Alaska Interagency #2 Crew has been ordered to northern California, while the Alaska Interagency #1 Crew is on the Black Crater Fire in Oregon.

Their mobilization was initiated by the USDA Forest Service to provide Interagency personnel, who did not have the opportunity this summer to support fires in Alaska, the chance to go to the Lower-48 to help meet the national demand for firefighters and to build on their training. According to Dan Warthin, the Western Area Fire Management Officer for the National Park Service, this is “a good chance for agency staff who have fire qualifications to augment their experience, whether fire is their primary job-focus or not.” Willie Thompson, with the USDA Forest Service Assistant Director for Fire Management Region 10, said: “This is an excellent opportunity for all the agencies to come together to start growing new leadership and to provide folks the experience in other fuel types.”

Not only is it the agencies’ desire to support the national wildland fire community and gain additional experience, it is equally important that these Interagency Crews exist to promote team-building and foster the existing working partnerships between agencies within the Alaska. The #1 crew consists of USDA Forest Service and National Park Service employees, while #2 consists of the same agencies listed in addition to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and State Division of Forestry employees.

The goal for the future is to put together Interagency Crews on a more regular basis to continue in support of the wildland fire community, create additional training opportunities, and to strengthen the relationships between Alaska’s agencies.